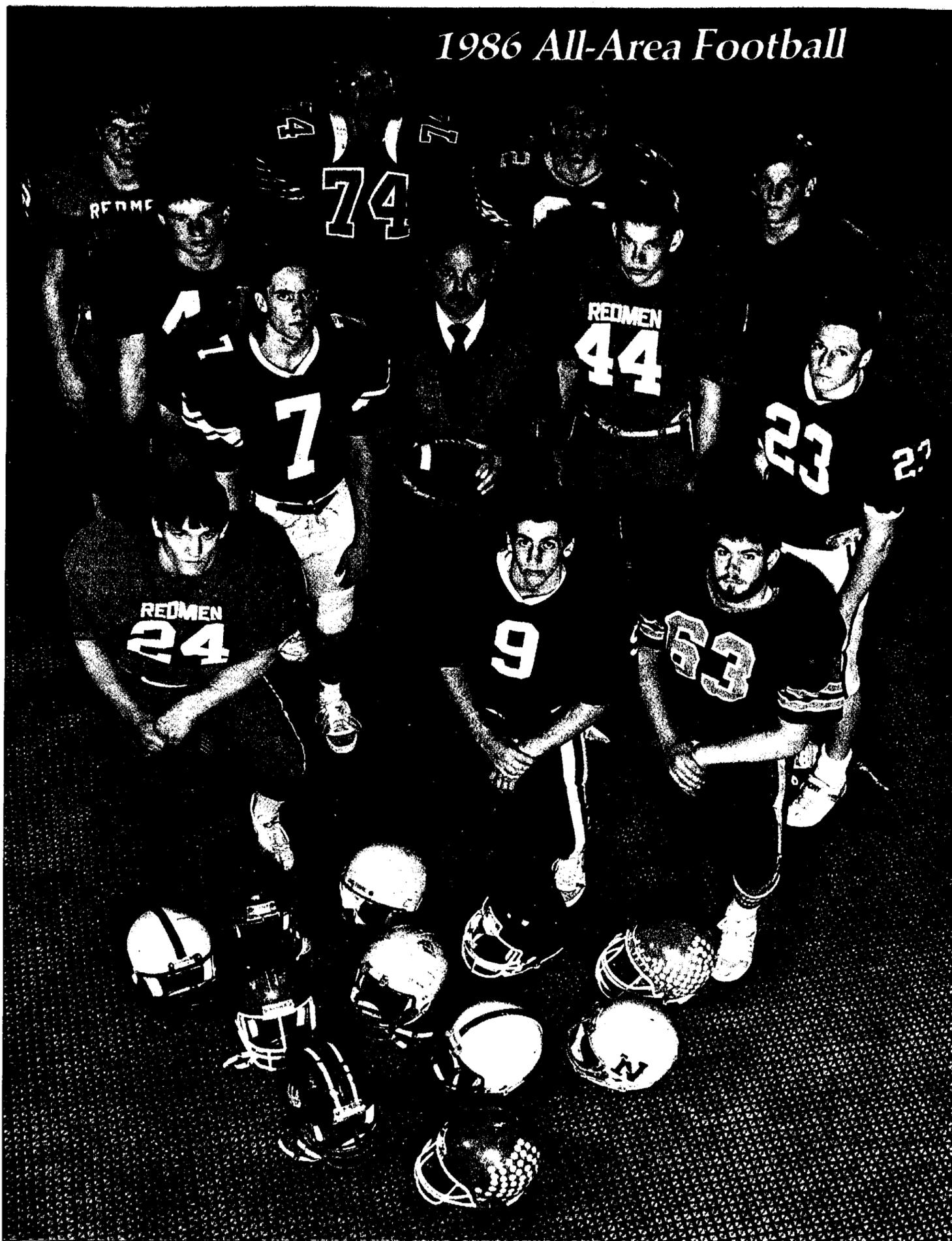


1986 All-Area Football



Craig Chandler

Members of the 1986 All-Area Top 11 football team are: (front row, from left) Jeff Simoneau, Smith Center (24); Billy Maddy, Stockton (9); Rusty Carter, Beloit (63). (Back row) Lyle Schoen, Smith Center (62); Mark Vrbas, Atwood (Second row) Mitch Berens, Victoria (44); Paul Wendel, Norton (7); Coach of the Year Roger Barta, Smith Center; Brooks Barta, Smith Center (44); T.J. Bransfield, Sacred Heart (23). (Back row) Lyle Schoen, Smith Center (62); Mark Vrbas, Atwood (74); Jerry Sonntag, Norton (82); Jeff Allison, Minneapolis (33).

Barta no 'dinosaur' after all

By STEPHEN WHITE
Sports Writer

As the first two-time recipient of The Salina Journal's Area Coach of the Year award, Smith Center's Roger Barta is understandably one of the state's more respected football coaches.

In nine years as a head coach, all at Smith Center, Barta has won 66 of 94 games while guiding the Redmen to Class 3A state championships in 1982 and 1986.

That Barta is the sixth Mid-Continent League coach in seven years to receive the award might make the award appear provincial.

It's not.

It's a tribute to the strength of the MCL, which has produced nine state champions in those seven years. No other league in the state, much less The Journal's 31-county north-central and northwest sector of the

Coach of the Year

1977 — Ed Buller, Clifton-Clyde;
Clayton Williams, Beloit
1978 — Paul Dennis, Abilene
1979 — Jon Bingesser, Sacred Heart
1980 — Larry Friend, Plainville
1981 — Robert Teeter, Victoria
1982 — Roger Barta, Smith Center
1983 — Dave Johnson, Osborne
1984 — Jeff Crockett, Minneapolis
1985 — Neil Melillo, Norton
1986 — Roger Barta, Smith Center

state, has so dominated high school football in the 1980s. And Smith Center was the dominant of the dominant this season, a season in which the MCL placed three teams in the state finals for a second consecutive year.

Only one team threatened to blemish the Redmen's perfect 13-0 record, and that was Norton, which fell to the Redmen, 32-31, in the fifth week of the season. Norton went on to claim its second consecutive Class 4A championship under Neil Melillo.

Melillo, last year's Area Coach of the Year, is about as far left as Barta is right where football strategies are concerned, but he has a deep respect for the hard-nosed, block-and-tackle precepts upon which Barta has built his success.

"Roger is still one of the dinosaurs ... a good dinosaur, but a dinosaur nonetheless," Melillo said, with a mixture of jest and respect. "Anybody who can win a state championship and not throw a pass in the championship game is a dinosaur."

"He's not the most complicated, but the things he does are very sound. He's an excellent teacher, and he communicates those things he wants to do extremely well."

Barta would not dispute his colleague's assessment.

"We think we win with technique and fundamentals," Barta said.

"We still believe you have to rush the football. We still believe in fundamentals, we believe in technique, we believe in playing kids with the big heart and a good head. We still believe in togetherness and the team concept. We try to get the kids to be the best they can be. Regardless of the talent, we want them to make the effort."

"We believe in execution, we believe in repetitions. We don't believe football is a difficult game at all. It's who blocks and tackles the best, who's the stronger athlete, and who wants it the most."

In one sentence, Barta says, "We really don't care about size and weight."

In the next breath, he says, "We think our weight program is a key to our success."

It's through that weight program, a program which Barta has nourished from infancy to its present exemplary status, that Smith Center climbed to the top.

"It's always difficult preparing for the physical intensity they're going to bring to you," Melillo said of the Redmen.

"Our kids are not big," Barta says, "but they're strong kids. They're dedicated and motivated to work on the weights, and that's what makes a good football team."

Whereas many coaches preoccupy themselves with the latest strategies of the game, Barta is more interested in the latest techniques of teaching fundamentals, such as weight training.

"We learn a lot more every year. As our kids go away to college and come back, they put a lot of input into our weight program," Barta said.

For example, he said, "we're more into Olympic lifts now than we were three years ago. We're doing more agility work during the off-season than we used to do."

So it is in that light that one can see that although his strategies may resemble relics from a past era, Roger Barta is no dinosaur after all.

Top 11 has everything but a quarterback

By TIM HOSTETTER
Sports Writer

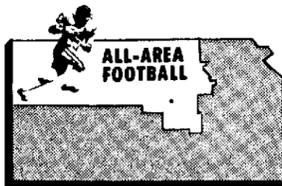
With the exception of a quarterback, The Salina Journal's All-Area 1986 Football Team comprises 11 two-way players representing every position.

On offense, there are six running backs, four linemen and a split end. Defensively, there are four linemen, five linebackers and two defensive backs.

The absence of a quarterback from a Top 11 team was unprecedented. There were four quarterbacks on last year's squad.

Smith Center's Jeff Simoneau and Brooks Barta are the first juniors to make The Journal's Top 11 team since Smith Center's Mike Rogers — now a University of Kansas running back — made the elite squad in 1982 when the Redmen won the Class 3A state championship. Ironically, Smith Center won the 3A crown again this season.

Lineman Lyle Schoen also represents Smith Center on the 11th Top 11 team. Norton, which had three players on last year's team, has two players on this year's squad in Jerry Sonntag and Paul Wendel. Making up the rest of the squad are



Minneapolis' Jeff Allison, Victoria's Mitch Berens, Sacred Heart's T.J. Bransfield, Beloit's Rusty Carter, Stockton's Billy Maddy and Atwood's Mark Vrbas. This year's Area Coach of the Year is Smith Center's Roger Barta.

Players on the Top 11 team are selected on the strength of their performances in high school, not their potential for college football careers. Here's a look at this year's elite squad.

JEFF ALLISON

The focal point of Minneapolis' football the last two years was Jeff Allison. Allison is one of the best all-around football players to come out of the North Central Activities Association. He's strong, possesses good size (6-1, 180), good speed (4.6 speed) and is a fierce hitter with an

unfailing nose for the football.

As a four-year starter for the Lions at defensive end and linebacker, Allison recorded more than 400 tackles — leading the NCAA the last two years — and earned first-team all-league honors the last three years. He was the only sophomore to earn such distinction on the 1984 All-NCAA first team.

In all, Allison established three defensive and seven offensive school records. Despite being keyed on by opponents' defenses, Allison rushed for 1,180 yards on 243 carries and scored 15 touchdowns from his tailback position this season. Included in those totals were two 200-yard games. Allison finished with 2,315 career rushing yards.

BROOKS BARTA

This is one coach's son truly deserving of honor. Roger Barta not only became the first area coach to be named The Journal's Coach of the Year twice but also saw his son have another superb year at linebacker and fullback and earn the area's most coveted award for a football player.

Barta has played the hot seat — middle linebacker — in Smith Cen-

1986 All-Area Top 11

Player, School	Hgt.	Wgt.	Yr.	Position
Jeff Allison, Minneapolis	6-1	185	Sr.	RB-LB
Brooks Barta, Smith Center	6-2	185	Jr.	FB-LB
Mitch Berens, Victoria	6-0	190	Sr.	RB-LB-P
T.J. Bransfield, Sacred Heart	5-10	165	Sr.	HB-CB-P
Rusty Carter, Beloit	6-2	220	Sr.	OT-DE
Billy Maddy, Stockton	5-10	150	Sr.	SE-FS
Lyle Schoen, Smith Center	6-2	198	Sr.	OT-DT
Jeff Simoneau, Smith Center	6-2	195	Jr.	RB-DE
Jerry Sonntag, Norton	6-2	195	Sr.	OG-LB
Mark Vrbas, Atwood	6-5	220	Sr.	OG-DE
Paul Wendel, Norton	5-9	165	Sr.	FB-DE

ter's 6-1 defense the last two seasons and he earned first-team All-Mid-Continent League honors both years. Barta recorded 81 solo tackles and 48 assists this past season. The 6-2, 185-pounder also caused four fumbles, recovered three others, had three interceptions and blocked two kicks.

Barta also was a first-team All-MCL pick at running back. His actual duty in Smith Center's wishbone offense was fullback where he gained 1,416 yards on 276 carries and scored 24 TDs. He rushed for 86 yards in his team's state championship victory over

Sabetha despite being hobbled by an ankle injury.

"Brooks has a lot of heart," said Roger Barta of his son. "He has always been a hard worker. Hopefully, he can be a little better next year."

MITCH BERENS

Victoria head football coach Doug Moeckel hates the thought of losing Berens.

"The thing I'm probably going to miss most about Mitch is his leadership," Moeckel said. "He has

(See Top 11, Page 27)